

then repair to some convenient roost, and there remain for ten to fifteen minutes. The juices of the stomach dissolve the sweet coating of the berry and then the kernels, together with the broken husks, are *disgorged*. The ground under a favorite roosting place of the Cedar-birds or Robins is frequently nearly covered with these disgorged kernels and one can see the seeds rattle down as each bird gets rid of two or three at a time.

In my back yard there is a shed under some high eucalyptus trees which appear to be the common rendezvous of several flocks of these birds which feed in the neighborhood. The pattering of the pepper seeds as they fall on the shed-roof is incessant all day long, and the ground is brown with them. I have often watched Robins and Mockingbirds at close range, and I noted that during the process of disgorgement the birds for a moment appeared to be in distress, and after two or three spasmodic coughs and a side-wise jerk of the head, out would come two or three of the kernels. All the birds which eat the pepper-berries have the same habit, and with the Mockingbirds, Western Robins, Cedar-birds and Phainopeplas, the peppers seem to be a very important food-supply. Besides these birds, I have seen the Townsend's Solitaire and Varied Thrush in the act of disgorging.

It is only within the last 12 or 15 years that the pepper-trees have been so abundantly planted in Southern California, and the fact that the birds in so short a time have acquired such an unusual habit, to conform with a new kind of food, seems to me very significant. Possibly this habit of disgorgement has been a common practice wherever the character of the food requires it, but it was new to me. Some one can probably throw more light on the subject.—JOSEPH GRINNELL, *Pasadena, Cal.*

An Unusual Song of the Red-winged Blackbird.—In the first week of May last, I happened on a company of Red-winged Blackbirds, in full play of their courting hour. The males among them were, of course, as tuneful and as actively engaged in the cutting of capers as is their wont, at such times.

But on this occasion it was more interesting to notice that the females, ordinarily so very demure, were showing themselves to be not a whit the less animated by the spirit of the play. And very amusing indeed it was to watch these comedians in sober brown, but in extemporized ruffs, puffs and puckers, pirouette, bow and posture, and thus quite out-do in airs and graces their black-coated gallants. Their shrill whistle, the meantime continually vied with, or replied to, the hoarse challenges of their admirers, while in noisy chattering, and in teasing notes, they were excessively voluble.

Whilst loitering thus entertained my ear had been attracted by repetitions of a strain which came from the dense foliage of a nearby pine. In meter it was the same as the *coke-al-lee-ee* of the shoulder-strapped members of the company. It was, however, pitched in a higher key, wholly free from gutturals, nor did it contain any sound that could be

represented by any consonant in our alphabet. It was also perfectly smooth in execution and mellow, flute-like in tone. The French *u* if dwelt upon, with inflections and modulations, as uttered by a sweet voiced Parisienne might closely, I imagine, represent the sound. After a while this singer came from his concealment, and, poising on an outer spray, there sang for eight or ten minutes, before flitting off, to be again hidden by the neighboring foliage. — THOMAS PROCTOR, *Brooklyn, N. Y.*

Spring Molt in *Spinus pinus*. — In a paper published in the Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Science, Philadelphia, 1896, p. 141, I stated that so far as I could judge from available material the Pine Finch had no spring molt. A series of specimens taken at West Chester, Chester Co., Pa., in May, 1897, by Dr. T. H. Montgomery shows, however, that quite an extensive renewal of the feathers occurs at this season. It of course does not extend to the remiges and rectrices. As my former statement was liable to be misleading, I take this opportunity to correct it. — WITMER STONE, *Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pa.*

An Earlier Name for *Ammodramus leconteii*. — *Fringilla caudacuta* LATHAM (Index Orn. I, 1790, 459) is usually cited as a doubtful synonym of *F. passerina* WILSON, but reference to the description shows that Latham's bird is Leconte's Sparrow. The description, though brief, fits the latter bird very exactly, both as to coloration and dimensions, and the locality, interior of Georgia, is within the regular winter range of the species. Fortunately no change of specific name is, in this instance, necessary, the *Oriolus caudacutus* of Gmelin, described two years before, being a member of the same genus, even if it should be found desirable to recognize *Coturniculus* as a separate genus from *Ammodramus*; for *A. leconteii* is certainly more nearly related to *A. caudacutus* than to either *Coturniculus passerinus* or *C. henslowii*. — ROBERT RIDGWAY, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

The Seaside Sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus*) in Massachusetts. — In a small private collection of mounted birds in Arlington, Mass., I find an adult Seaside Sparrow with the following history: shot by Mr. Eugene H. Freeman on the bank of the Neponset River, at high tide, about half way between Milton Lower Mills and Granite Bridge, on the Milton side of the river. Unfortunately the date of capture is not recorded; it was in the early autumn, however, something over twenty years ago, so Mr. Freeman tells me.

In most of the older lists of the birds of Massachusetts the Seaside Sparrow is said to be a common summer resident of the salt marshes along the coast. This opinion doubtless arose from confounding the Seaside Sparrow with the Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*). That such a confusion prevailed is shown by the fact that many of the old lists (*e. g.*, Emmons's 'Birds of Mass.,' Holder's 'Birds of Lynn,')